

Supporting mental wellbeing during the Pandemic

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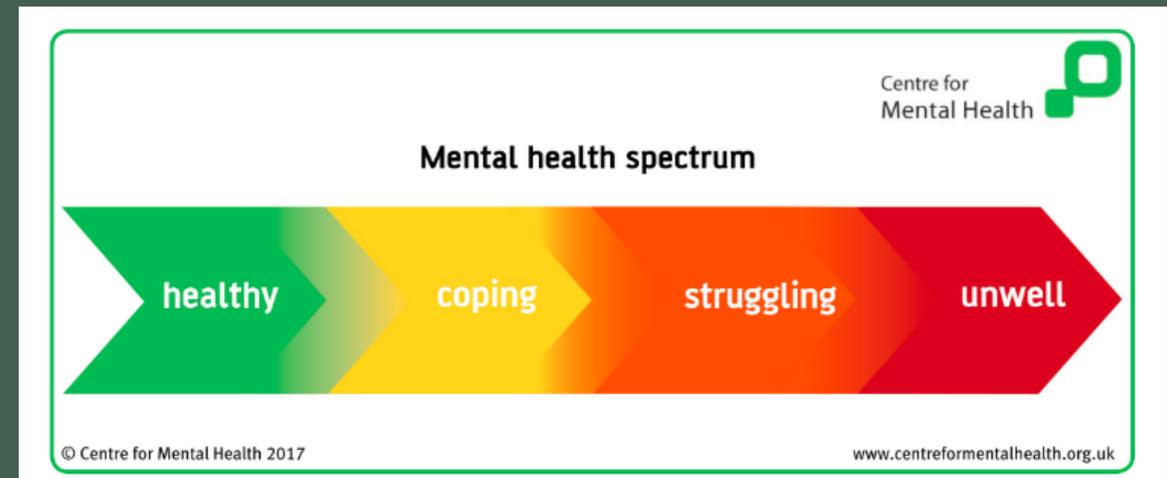
Focus for this presentation

- Mental health and wellbeing in context
- Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of residents
- Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of staff and volunteers
- You!



The context

- It's normal to be anxious. The most common issues affecting wellbeing are **worry** about the future (63%) and feeling **stressed or anxious** (56%) (ONS data, June 2020)
- We are hard-wired to react like this.
- Many of our reactions and the reactions of others are normal reactions to an abnormal situation.
- We all have mental health, we all need to look after it.



Same storm, different boat....



- Taking account of pre-pandemic trajectories, mental health has worsened substantially (by 8.1% on average) as a result of the pandemic. Groups have not been equally impacted; **young adults and women – groups with worse mental health pre-pandemic** – have been hit hardest (IFS, June 2020).
- Levels of anxiety and depression fell in early June as lockdown measures began to lift. But these remained highest among **young people, those with lower household income, people with a diagnosed mental illness, people living with children, and people living in urban areas.** (UCL, end June, 2020).

The evidence

- Although well intentioned, intervening in people's natural coping mechanisms too early can be detrimental.
- Most people will experience a **natural recovery** from how they are feeling.
- We should not always 'rush in' with psychological interventions and services.
- The principles of **Psychological First Aid** can be really helpful for supporting people during a crisis, and shortly after (**see links at the end of the presentation**).
- **So that's...** care, connection, education, support, comfort, support and provision.



A stepped care model – for resident and staff/volunteer support



What can we do to support mental wellbeing within communities?

- Keep information about local services and organisations **simple and accessible** – when we're anxious, and uncertainty is high, we struggle to retain and recall information.
- Offer, and support, opportunities for **connection** – supportive and empathic conversations. Listen with empathy and an open-mind. Share the core messages, it's normal to be anxious, it's okay not to be okay, and there's help there for you if you need it.
- Think **wider determinants of mental wellbeing**. Ask open questions, and listen for cues. Support/signposting to help residents meet their **basic needs** – food, shelter, warmth, financial support.
- **Communicate regularly** – with clear simple and accessible messaging, using the range of preferred methods, and with consideration of those that may not access digital methods.
- Provide signpost to information re: **normal reactions and further support options** – where to get mental health self-help, specialist services and crisis support (**see links at the end of the presentation**).



What can we do as leaders to support mental wellbeing within our teams?



- Most importantly, be visible, be available (inc remotely), be supportive.
- Where you can, guide staff to the resources they need, however basic (e.g. to rest, to speak with family).
- Have a clear and regular communication strategy
- Tolerate and manage uncertainty for yourself and your staff.
- Remember, you do not need to have all the solutions all the time.
- Establish and support peer support mechanisms – i.e. virtual tea breaks
- Utilise existing and trusted support mechanisms/personnel
- Give staff/volunteers permission to step back and take breaks
- Provide clear information on specialist support services – including crisis information
- Your wellbeing is important too, be compassionate towards yourself.

What about you?

Restorative self-care for you as leaders

- **Physical energy** - Is your body getting what it needs to properly restore itself each day?
- **Intellectual energy** - What do you do to relax that gives your mind the time and opportunity to recover throughout the day?
- **Emotional energy** - What coping mechanisms do you use to process your emotions and develop your self-awareness? Who or what in your life helps you experience positive emotions?
- **Spiritual energy/values** - What really matters to you? What really matters to you right now?

Remember this is a marathon not a sprint.

For more reading on leadership support consider:

<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/projects/leading-through-covid-19>



Key signposting – National and Derbyshire-wide



- Self-help emotional wellbeing info – [Joined up Care Derbyshire wellbeing during the pandemic](#) or the council's [Coronavirus wellbeing pages](#)
- Mental health support - [Derbyshire Mental Health Support line](#), GP/111, [IAPT \(talking therapy\)](#), Samaritans (**116 123**). In medical emergency – 999/A&E
- National bereavement support – [NHS bereavement support line](#) or Cruse bereavement support.
- Staff and volunteer wellbeing support - <https://joinedupcarederbyshire.co.uk/staff-support>

Further resources



Three documents developed by Public Health, Derbyshire County Council, to support community and voluntary organisations during this period.

- Talking about mental health and wellbeing – A support pack for volunteers
- COVID-19 and the Voluntary and Community Sector - Supporting volunteer and staff wellbeing
- Staff wellbeing pack – in press

Thank you for listening

○ Are there any reflections or questions?

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